



Cross-Cultural Competencies for the NASA International Internship Project

Elizabeth M. Niedbala, Texas Tech University | Jessica Feinberg, Smith College
Mentor: Krisstina Wilmoth, Office of the Center Director, NASA Ames Research Center

CCC DEFINED

- Skill that **facilitates international and intercultural engagement**
- Stems from both stable individual traits and behaviors and habits that can be strengthened over time
- **Critical for workplaces and projects that include multinational and multicultural employees**, such as NASA' I² project

COMPETENCIES

Confidence in one' s language ability¹⁻²

Cultural sharing³

Positive models of engagement⁴

Awareness of one' s own culture⁵

General competencies (e.g., Trust⁶)

ACTIVITIES

- Reflection on past language success
- Multicultural nights and activities
- Comparing variation within a shared experience
- Presentations by multinational NASA employees
- Scavenger hunts in a grocery store & downtown
- Happy hour events
- Team building & bonding activities

BENEFITS TO NASA

- Different cultures emphasize different things, so **creating an inclusive international environment will facilitate creativity and problem-solving**
- More diverse teams will **dream up a greater range of possibilities & create better missions**

FUTURE STEPS

- Continue research on specific competencies
- Develop a logical schedule of activities
- Deploy schedule for the Fall 2017 NASA I² cohort
- Create qualitative and quantitative tests to determine project success

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- **Dr. Erika Rodriguez**, for her vision in bringing Smith College students to NASA ARC
- **Commander Leedjia Svec**, for her unending patience, advice, and guidance

REFERENCES

¹MacIntyre, P. D., Clément, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 82, 545-562. ²MacIntyre, P. D., Noels, K. A., & Clément, R. (1996). Biases in self-ratings of second language proficiency: The role of language anxiety. *Language Learning*, 47, 265-287. ³Clément, R. (1980). Ethnicity, context and communicative competence in a second language. In M. Giles, W. P. Robinson, & P. M. Smith (Eds.), *Language: Social psychological perspectives* (pp. 147-154). Oxford: Pergamon Press. ⁴Leask, B. (2009). Using formal and informal curricula to improve interactions between home and international students. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 13, 205-221. ⁵Deardorff, D. K. (2004). The identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student of international education at institutions of higher education in the United States [dissertation]. Unpublished dissertation, University of North Carolina, Raleigh, North Carolina. ⁶Aron, A., Melinat, E., Aron, E. N., Vallone, R. D., & Bator, R. J. (1997). The experimental generation of interpersonal closeness: A procedure and some preliminary findings. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 23, 363-377. IMAGE CREDIT: nasa.gov